

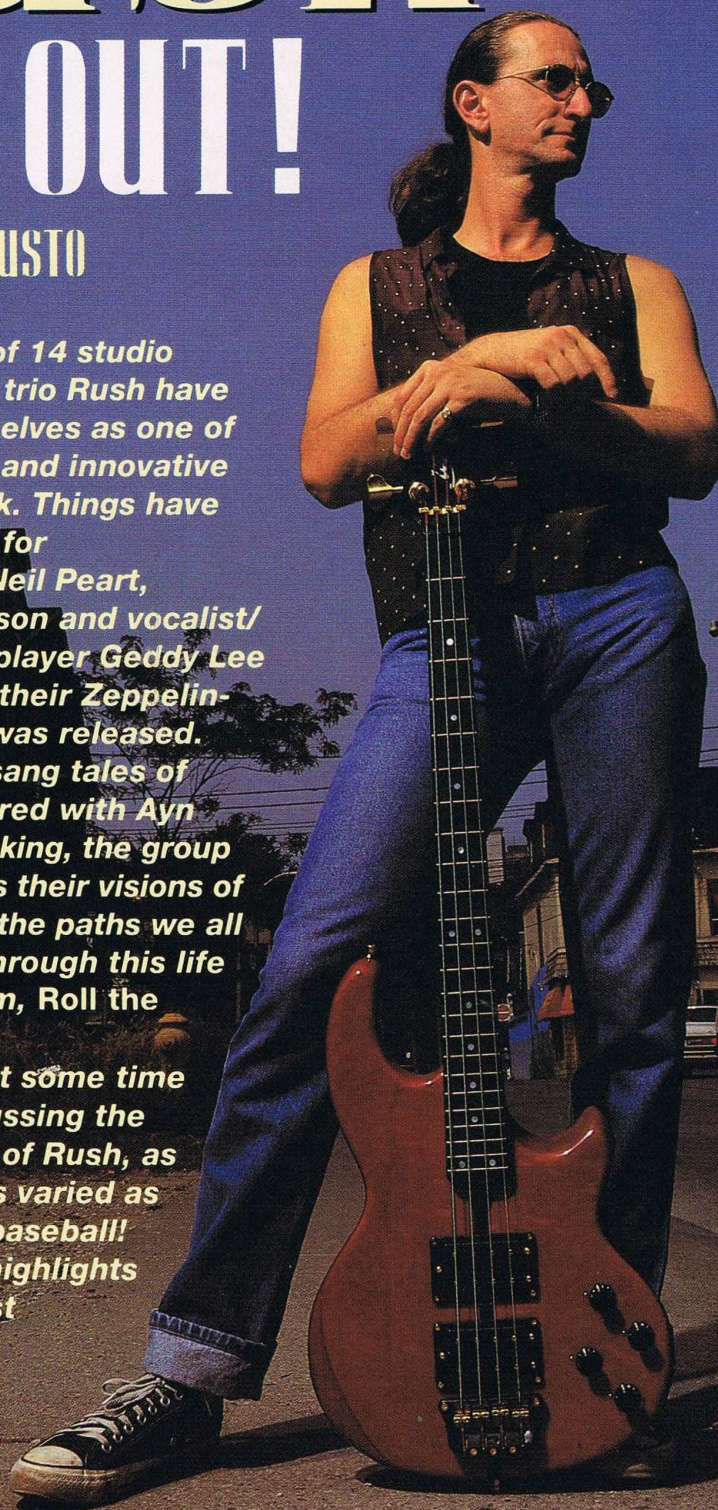
# RUSH

## TRIP OUT!

BY TROY J. AUGUSTO

Over the course of 14 studio albums, Canadian trio Rush have established themselves as one of the most talented and innovative bands in all of rock. Things have certainly changed for drummer/lyricist Neil Peart, Guitarist Alex Lifeson and vocalist/bassist/keyboard-player Geddy Lee since 1974, when their Zeppelin-influenced debut was released. Where they once sang tales of future worlds colored with Ayn Rand-inspired thinking, the group now shares with us their visions of modern living and the paths we all walk as we pass through this life on their new album, *Roll the Bones*.

Geddy and I spent some time in New York, discussing the history and future of Rush, as well as subjects as varied as Communism and baseball! What follows are highlights of what was a most enjoyable and enlightening conversation.





**RIP:** In the band's new bio, Neal says that "there is a realization on the band's part of a long creative partnership ahead of us." It did seem that, on the last couple of tours, fans were wondering, "Is this the last time we're going to see this band? Is this the last record?"

**GEDDY LEE:** Yeah. I think that's a question we probably asked ourselves a lot on the last couple of tours. "How long can I keep doing this? I've been doing this with the same guys for 15 years. Is it time to call it quits?" There were some varying opinions on the values of touring floating around, whether we wanted to bother. I think by taking enough time between records and just being of a particular age, we were able to clear a lot of that stuff up. When we went to do this record, we were more focused and happier about the band.

**RIP:** It seems like there's an enthusiasm, a spirit now, that might have been missing. Was Rush in a rut?

**GEDDY:** I think the band was unhappy internally. We were still able to get together and be creative, but I think we were a little unhappy as to some of the things I just alluded to—pressures, demands on your time, the uncertainties of what you want to do with the rest of your life. I think being able to take more time away from the band and indulge in family and personal interests enabled us to balance our priorities; and I think that when we went to do this record, we felt in control of our lives and confident that we still wanted to be a band. That's the reason for the spirit now.

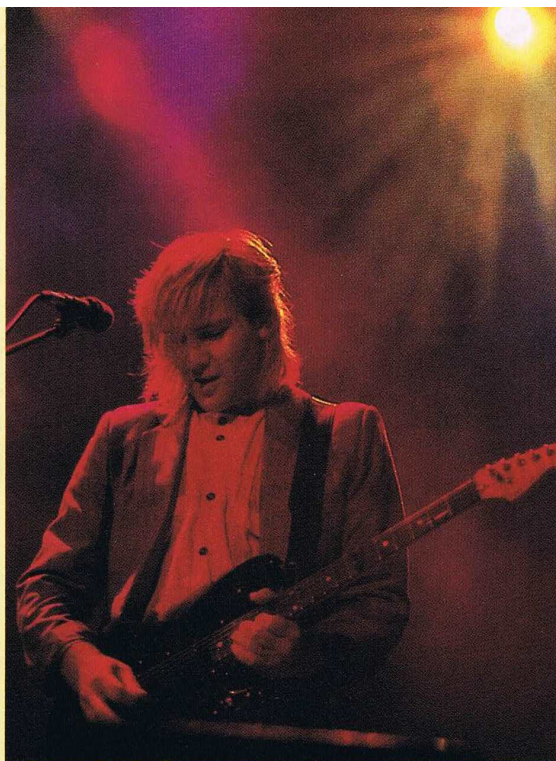
**RIP:** There are elements of this album that are reminiscent of different parts of the band's past. Was there a conscious effort to look back and incorporate some older ideas with new ones?

**GEDDY:** Not really. The desires of *Roll the Bones* were quite simple, really. We liked the direction that *Presto* took, but we wanted to go a little farther in that direction by streamlining the sound and taking a slightly more aggressive attitude toward the songs, and a more melodic and probably experimental attitude in terms of vocals and melody. It was really quite a simple mandate, and in the end it all came out in a real natural way.

**RIP:** *Roll the Bones* talks about things that anyone can relate to, which wasn't always the case with a Rush record. Is there a theme that ties the album together?

**GEDDY:** Well, there is a loose theme, and at times it's more obvious than others. A theme of chance and fate and luck, the way

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Bob Leafe

stand still, whether it be creatively or in our lives. Some people have to keep moving to feel that they're getting the most out of life, while staying in one place is almost anti-living.

**RIP:** It's been a long time since you guys did an instrumental [1981's "YYZ"]. Was "Where's My Thing" planned, or did it just happen?

**GEDDY:** We wanted to do an instrumental on *Presto*, but by the time we started writing it, we usually would rape it, and take its parts, and put them into another song. This time around, we were determined; and at one point Neal just stopped giving us lyrics, so we were able to do it.

**RIP:** The song "Ghost of a Chance" talks about the different choices we make and the different paths we take that affect our lives and our relationships. Does the song also apply to the band, considering the events that led to where you are now?

**GEDDY:** I don't know. To me, that song is more about intimate relationships, whether it be with the opposite sex or friends or whatever. The song describes the different paths you go through in life, the different corners you turn. There's so many places that you can find yourself at in your life, and it's surprisingly difficult to find somebody you can relate to that strongly.

**RIP:** It must get harder, as the years go by, to plan a live set-list.

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**GEDDY:** Yeah, it's a monumental task. Fourteen studio albums at an hour apiece is 14 hours of music, and to try to narrow that into two hours isn't an easy job. But we do it!

**RIP:** Do you think that Rush will ever stop touring and just exist as a studio band?

**GEDDY:** I don't think that's a realistic option for us. There are too many benefits that we get. The tremendous discipline it takes to do a tour is good for your musicianship, and there's nothing like playing 60 shows to sharpen your playing ability.

**RIP:** Your voice has changed over the years. Are you comfortable with the way it's evolved, the way it sounds now?

**GEDDY:** Yeah, I am. It's been an intentional, conscious effort to get more range and more flexibility in my voice—a stronger sense of melody and feeling. It's been a high priority for me over the last few years. For me, on the last few albums, the emphasis has been very strongly on the vocals.

**RIP:** Considering how successful Rush is now, early on there wasn't a lot of support from the press or radio. Are there bad feelings still, or the desire to say, "We did it without those aspects"?

**GEDDY:** No, I don't think we still have a chip on our shoulder. We get good reviews, we get bad reviews, and I think they all kind of breeze by us. Of course we want to do well. We're excited when things go well, and we're complimented when we get a good review. But I'd say that we're just a bit more casual about everything now, and we're more interested in making good music and playing well at a show. I wouldn't say we're compla-

cent about it—perhaps slightly jaded—but I think we can put it in its proper place much easier now.

**RIP:** How do you think Rush will be remembered?

**GEDDY:** I haven't got a clue.

**RIP:** How would you *want* Rush to be remembered, then?

**GEDDY:** Well, it's hard to think about your place in history. The hardest-working band in show business—that's how I want to be remembered! I guess I just want Rush to be looked at as a band that had high standards, and that we had our own sound. If you can have your own sound, I think you've really accomplished something. •